YOUR HEALTH & SAFETY ARE OUR #1 CONCERNS

- **We care about you and your families.**
- **Vaccines have kept troops healthy since the days of George Washington.**
- **This vaccine helps you complete your mission and return home safely.**

ANTHRAX VACCINE IS SAFE AND EFFECTIVE

- **U.S. anthrax vaccine has been FDA-licensed since 1970.**
- **The National Academy of Sciences and six panels of civilian scientists confirm that anthrax vaccine works and is safe.**
  www.nap.edu/catalog/10310.html
- **Research shows anthrax vaccine protects.**

THE THREAT FROM ANTHRAX IS DEADLY AND REAL

- **Anthrax is a top choice for use as a biological-warfare agent.**
- **The most deadly form of anthrax, inhalational anthrax, is the form most expected on the battlefield.**
- **You can be infected with anthrax and not know it, until it's too late.**

VACCINATION OFFERS A LAYER OF PROTECTION, IN ADDITION TO ANTIBIOTICS AND OTHER MEASURES, NEEDED FOR CERTAIN MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES

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Information about anthrax vaccine…

- The FDA-licensed dosing schedule is 0-2-4 weeks, 6-12-18 months, plus annual boosters, given subcutaneously.
- Injection site reactions, such as a burning sensation, redness and swelling are common. Local reactions occur in 30% of men and 60% of women. Anthrax vaccine often causes a lump under the skin where the vaccine is injected. These lumps can last a few weeks, but they go away on their own.
- Systemic reactions, such as headaches or a fever are less common than injection site reactions. These occur at rates similar to other vaccines: 5-35%.
- Adverse events after vaccination are reported to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS). VAERS forms are available at **www.vaers.org** or call **800.822.7967.** Health care workers and vaccine recipients are encouraged to report via the VAERS system any severe reactions that might occur within 30 days of vaccine injection, require medical treatment and/or interfere with work or recreation. VAERS reporting is required with reactions that cause hospitalization or loss of work for 24 hours or more.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM ANTHRAX VACCINE

Who should <u>not</u> get the anthrax vaccine?

✓ Some people should not get anthrax vaccine or should wait:

- Serious reaction to a prior dose raising concerns about safety of next dose
- Pregnancy
- HIV and immunosuppressed individuals
- Recovered from cutaneous skin anthrax

✓ You can request an evaluation for a medical exemption from your provider. If you or your provider need assistance with medical exemption questions, the Walter Reed Vaccine Healthcare Center (VHC) is available for consultation services or referral for a second opinion.

What side effects can I expect?

✓ A burning sensation often occurs immediately after getting anthrax vaccine and can last about a minute.

✓ Like other vaccines, anthrax vaccine may cause soreness, redness, itching, and swelling at the injection site.

✓ Up to 30% of men and 60% of women report local reactions, but these reactions usually last only a few days. A lump at the site occurs commonly, up to 50% of the time, lasting for a few weeks.

✓ Larger reactions occur in about 1-4% of vaccinees.

✓ Beyond the injection site, 5% to 35% may notice such symptoms as muscle or joint aches, headaches, rashes, chills, low-grade fever or nausea. These symptoms usually go away in less than a week.

✓ Any vaccine, like all prescription drugs, can cause serious reactions including those requiring hospitalization or medical care. Severe allergic reactions occur less than once per 100,000 doses.

How many shots will I get?

✓ The FDA-licensed schedule for anthrax vaccine is 6 doses given over 18 months: 0-2-4 weeks, 6-12-18 months, plus annual boosters. It is important to stay on schedule and not to get a dose earlier than your due date. It is also important to continue the series once you start, even when returning from deployment.

Is this vaccine safe and effective?

✓ Yes. Study after study shows people vaccinated against anthrax are as healthy as unvaccinated people. However, like all drugs, anthrax vaccine may rarely cause adverse

What about long-term side effects?

✓ This vaccine has been used for over 30 years. Like other vaccines, death or serious illness have rarely been reported after vaccination. Each case is carefully reviewed by CDC, FDA, and DoD, to make vaccinations as safe as possible.

If I have a health problem or adverse event after vaccination, what do I do?

✓ First, if a health problem occurs following any vaccine, seek medical care to take care of your immediate health problem! If your symptoms persist, you or your provider may contact the Walter Reed Vaccine Healthcare Center at **202.782.0411**. Then follow the information below and on the cut-out card to file a report with the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS). We are committed to giving you the best individualized care, no matter what caused the problem.

When do we file a VAERS report?

✓ Adverse events after vaccination are reported to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS). VAERS forms are available at **www.vaers.org** or call **800.822.7967**. Health care workers and vaccine recipients are encouraged to report via the VAERS system any severe events that require medical treatment and/or interfere with work or recreation. VAERS reporting is required with reactions that cause hospitalization or loss of work for 24 hours or more.

✓ You or any healthcare provider (civilian or military) treating you may contact the Walter Reed Vaccine Healthcare Center (VHC) for assistance with preparing and submitting a VAERS report or vaccine adverse event consultation.

If I started anthrax vaccinations, but had doses delayed, do I have to restart the series?

✓ No, you will not have to restart the series. You will simply pick up where you left off. This is consistent with national guidelines from the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices.

✓ The protection of each additional dose builds on the immune response to earlier doses and delays in timing do not interfere with the response. This is like climbing steps on a ladder towards full protection.

What about Reserve Component (RC) units that drill every 4 weeks?

✓ Your unit commander, in coordination with

I'm in the Reserves/National Guard. If I have an adverse event, can I go to a military hospital or clinic?

✓ Adverse events after military directed vaccinations are in "line-of-duty" (LOD). Some RC members may seek medical care from their private physicians, while others may seek medical care at a local military Medical Treatment Facility (MTF).

✓ Those who seek treatment for an adverse event related to an official immunization will be treated. Any necessary line-of-duty (LOD) documents shall be completed after the person is treated. If you see a NON-military provider, be sure to notify your commander for the proper paperwork for a LOD/Notice of Eligibility determination.

✓ Evaluation or treatment will not be denied or delayed, pending a line-of-duty determination.

✓ For civilian health services outside a military Medical Treatment Facility call:
888.MHS.MMSO (888.647.6676)

What if I'm pregnant, breast-feeding or if I'm planning on having children?

✓ Good medical practice defers vaccination during pregnancy, unless clearly needed. If you are unsure if you are pregnant, you may request a pregnancy test from your regular medical provider.

✓ A study at Fort Stewart found that vaccinated women get pregnant and give birth at the same rate as unvaccinated women. Outcomes of pregnancies are comparable in vaccinated and unvaccinated women.

✓ The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that vaccines are safe both for nursing mothers and their breast-fed infants.

✓ There is no medical reason for vaccinated women or partners of vaccinated men to delay child bearing.

Anthrax Vaccine Immunization Program

For more information contact:

- **AVIP Agency Website: www.anthrax.mil**
  E-Mail: **vaccines@amedd.army.mil**
  Toll-Free: **877.GETVACC**
- **CDC National Immunization Hotline: 800.232.2522**
- **Walter Reed Vaccine Healthcare Center: 202.782.0411**

Information for Civilian Healthcare Providers: If a Reservist or Active Duty Military Member presents to you for a condition that may be an adverse event caused by a military vaccination, please provide the appropriate care and contact the following for authorization and payment:

The Military Treatment Facility (MTF) where the member is enrolled, OR contact

The Military Medical Support Office (MMSO) 888-647-6676 if the member is not enrolled to an MTF.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ANTHRAX VACCINE

For more information
www.anthrax.mil
e-mail us at:
vaccines@amedd.army.mil
877-GET-VACC
DSN 761-4245

2 January 2004

Local Point of Contact